

 <p>Fair Maps</p>	<p>Redistricting Testimony Fair and Open Redistricting April 20, 2021</p>	<p>COMMON GROUND FOR TEXANS</p>
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To Rep. Todd Hunter, House Committee on Redistricting Chair

Common Ground for Texans is in support of all legislation that creates a fair and open process when districts are drawn. Consequently, we support the following bills that are being presented today:

HJR 121

HB 1025

HB 282

HJR 127

HJR 59

HB 3094

How house districts are drawn affects every political issue, from the economy to healthcare to public education. If politicians are elected from districts that do not reflect the population, you end up with situations where politicians support policies that the vast majority of people in their districts oppose, or they won't support policies that the vast majority of people do support. **When politicians manipulate maps for personal or political gain, it prevents residents like me from having our voices heard** on policies that affect us all.

Purposefully breaking up communities takes away the community's ability to come together and advocate for important issues. For example, here in Travis County we are artificially broken into *six* congressional districts each extending way off in every direction. This means that no congressperson is fully committed to listening to our concerns. I care about issues like gun violence prevention, women's reproductive health, and climate change. When maps are unfairly rigged, we end up seeing a legislature that represents special interests and politicians, instead of representing the people. **This is a divide and conquer strategy employed by both major political parties and it has to stop!**

Although April 1, 2020 is the official day of the 2020 census, the official reporting date has been delayed beyond the date of the end of the 87th Texas legislative session. It is likely that the drawing of districts will take place during a special session. In order for our democracy to function effectively, **the redistricting process must be both fair and open**. The public needs to have a voice in every stage of this process. Sufficient notice and capability must be given to the public to review the maps before hearings convene.

This is an opportunity for the Texas Legislature to finally get this process right and avoid wasting millions of taxpayer dollars and years on lawsuits, so I hope that you will take this testimony to heart. Thank you for your willingness to listen to today.

Sincerely,

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cc: House Committee on Redistricting members